

Choice Charter

Your rights to choice in public services

The users of public services should have the power to make decisions and exercise choices to meet their needs, not choices that have been determined by others. This is why the Government has increased the choices people have in the public services they use.

When people have the power to make decisions and exercise choices, the value of public funds can be greater than when the state makes decisions for them.

We are building a culture in which people have the opportunity to exert control over the service they receive, to empower service users and ensure services continue to meet their needs and quality expectations.

This sets out the principles the Government is following to increase choice and what service users should receive from their services. We will appoint a Senior Civil Servant as choice advisor to have oversight of these principles, working with government departments and sector leaders to ensure they are a reality across public services.

1. You can have a say in how a public service is provided to you.

The Government provides opportunities for choice and control over the services you use. In the NHS, you can choose the GP you wish to see in your GP practice, where you are seen for your first outpatient appointment and who will be in charge of your treatment. The Government is increasing the control you have by providing personal budgets to spend on the care you want, by giving you a say in how social housing is managed and by letting you work with your community to deliver the schools you want for your children.

The Government is ensuring that all available choices are good ones and has set clear minimum standards such as floor standards in schools which rise over time. Choices available to you are set out in individual choice frameworks including where to get more information to help you choose and how to complain if you are not offered a choice.

2. You will be given the opportunity to take up and exercise the choices available.

You should be prompted about the options available to you by your service. The Government is ensuring barriers to choices are minimised, access to available choices is fair and the poorest are advantaged. Schools are using the Pupil Premium to address the disadvantage of the poorest pupils.

3. You will be given clear, accessible and high-quality information and advice to inform your choices.

In all public services a range of information and advice is available to help you make an informed choice. School Performance Tables are published every year and provide information on the attainment levels at individual schools. The NHS Choices website helps you make choices about your health, find services and experiences of others. This data is made available in a clear and accessible form and compliments the wealth of independent information and advice that you can draw on to inform your choice.

4. You have clear avenues to complain if you do not receive the choices you are entitled to.

In all services you have a range of means of redress over the degree of choice you have received, or where standards are not good enough. You can complain to the service directly or, if you are still not satisfied complain to the relevant Ombudsman. As well as telling you how to make the choices to which you are entitled, individual service Choice Frameworks set out how you can complain if you are not offered a choice.

Choice Frameworks

We have created Choice Frameworks to outline and raise awareness of the choices available in a number of individual public services. These Frameworks will:

- set out what choices should be available to people as described in current policy or legislation;
- set out who will be responsible for providing this choice; set out (or signpost to) relevant quality standards, inspections and licensing requirements;
- signpost to sources of information to help people make informed decisions; and
- explain how people can make a complaint if they are unable to exercise their right to choose as set out in the frameworks.

Providers of public services will act in accordance with established Choice Frameworks to ensure choice is widely available.

Choice Frameworks have been published in clear and accessible formats in a number of public services.

NHS CARE (2013 – 14)	
Date of publication	Dec 2012
Link	https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/156258/2013-14-Choice-Framework.pdf.pdf

SOCIAL HOUSING	
Date of publication	February 2013
Link	https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/85870/130219_Social_Housing_Choice_Framework_final_.pdf

SCHOOL EDUCATION	
Date of publication	May 2013
Link	(tbc)

FUNDED EARLY EDUCATION	
Date of publication	May 2013
Link	(tbc)

ADULT SOCIAL CARE	
Date of publication	May 2013
Link	(tbc)



Cabinet Office
1 Horse Guards Road
London SW1A 2HQ

May 2013

© Crown copyright 2013